

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings and versions of the claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): An image forming apparatus, comprising:

a scanner unit configured to scan an image;

a printer unit disposed below the scanner unit and configured to form an image on a recording medium;

an operation panel disposed above the printer unit and adjacent a front side of the image forming apparatus, the operation panel being configured to receive a command by which the image forming apparatus is operated;

a sheet discharge section disposed between the scanner unit and the printer unit, the sheet discharge section being configured to receive the recording medium including the image; and

a casing disposed adjacent a side end of the printer unit, the casing being arranged to support the operation panel within a back and forth width direction of the casing;

wherein a front side of the scanner unit is off set from a front side of the printer unit, and the scanner unit is supported by a side wall of the printer unit and forms an opening to the sheet discharge section that is open in at least two directions.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the operation panel is disposed adjacent the scanner unit.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the operation panel is connected to the scanner unit, and the operation panel is off set from the front side of the printer unit.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the operation panel is set back from the front side of the printer unit.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the scanner unit is set back from the front side of the printer unit.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the scanner unit does not extend past a plane in which the front side of the printer unit is disposed.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the front side of the scanner unit does not extend past a front side of the casing.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the front side of the casing is disposed in a same plane as the front side of the printer unit.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising:

at least one fixing roller disposed in the casing.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the least one fixing roller comprises a pair of fixing rollers.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the scanner unit forms the opening to the sheet discharge section that is open in first and second directions about perpendicular to one another.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): An image forming apparatus, comprising:

- means for scanning an image;
- means for printing a scanned image on a recording medium, the means for printing being disposed below the means for scanning;
- means for inputting a command by which the image forming apparatus is operated, the means for inputting being disposed above the means for printing and adjacent a front side of the image forming apparatus;
- means for receiving the recording medium including the image, the means for receiving being disposed between the means for scanning and the means for printing; and
- means for supporting the means for inputting; the means for supporting being connected to the means for printing and supporting the means for inputting the command in a back and forth width direction of the means for supporting the means for inputting;

wherein a front side of the means for scanning is off set from a front side of the means for printing, and the means for scanning is supported by a side wall of the means for printing and forms an opening to the means for receiving that is open in at least two directions.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the means for inputting is connected to the means for scanning, and the means for inputting is off set from the front side of means for printing.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the means for inputting and the means for scanning do not extend past the front side of the means for printing.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the means for scanning does not extend past the front side of the means for printing.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): An image forming apparatus, comprising:

- an image reading block configured to read an image;
- an image forming block disposed below the image reading block and being configured to form an image on a recording sheet;
- an operation panel disposed above the image forming block and adjacent a front side of the image forming apparatus, the operation panel being configured to receive a command by which the image forming apparatus is operated;
- a sheet discharge section disposed between the image reading block and the image forming block, the sheet discharge section being configured to receive the recording sheet including the image; and
- a casing disposed adjacent a side end of the image forming block, the casing being arranged to support the operation panel within a back and forth width direction of the casing;

wherein a front side of the image reading block is set back from a front side of the image forming block, and the image reading block is supported by a side wall of the image forming block and forms an opening to the sheet discharge section that is open in at least two directions.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 18, further comprising:

at least one set of fixing rollers disposed in the casing.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the image reading block forms the opening to the sheet discharge section that is open in first and second directions about perpendicular to one another.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the front side of the operation panel is set back from the front side of the image forming block.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): An image forming apparatus, comprising:

means for reading an image;

means for forming an image on a recording sheet, the means for forming being disposed below the means for reading;

means for inputting a command for operating the image forming apparatus, the means for inputting being disposed above the means for forming and adjacent a front side of the image forming apparatus;

means for receiving the recording sheet on which the image is formed, the means for receiving being disposed between the means for reading and the means for forming; and

means for supporting the means for inputting in a back and forth width direction of the means for supporting the means for inputting,

wherein a front side of the means for reading is set back from a front side of the means for forming an image, and the means for reading is supported by a side wall of the means for forming and forms an opening to the means for receiving that is open in at least two directions.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising:

means for fixing the image formed on the recording sheet.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the means for forming forms the opening to the means for receiving that is open in first and second directions about perpendicular to one another.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the front side of the means for inputting is set back from the front side of the means for forming an image.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein the left and right width of said ~~image reading block~~ scanner unit is substantially the same as that of the operation ~~block~~ panel.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein ~~said operation block~~ the operation panel includes an operation key directly above the casing, said operation key operating the image forming apparatus.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 3, further comprising:

- a photosensitive member configured to carry a latent image;
- at least two developing devices each configured to develop the latent image in different color;
- an intermediate transfer member configured to receive transfer of the developed image from the photosensitive member; and
- a sheet transfer device configured to transfer the developed image onto a transfer sheet, said sheet transfer device contacting the intermediate transfer member at a prescribed transfer position;

wherein said prescribed transfer position is arranged within a left and right width portion of the casing below the casing.